

We claim:

1. A hardcopy device having a media feed path and a sensor system arranged to generate first and second images of a first portion of print media at first and second positions respectively along the feed path, the system being further arranged to compare the first and second images and thereby detect a change in the angle of skew of the media between the first and second positions.
2. A device according to claim 1, wherein the system comprises first and second sensors, spaced apart in the direction of the media feed path, arranged to generate the first and second images respectively.
3. A device according to claim 1, wherein the system comprises a sensor adapted to generate both the first and second images.
4. A device according to claim 3, wherein the sensor has a field of view arranged to simultaneously view the first position and the second positions.
5. A device according to claim 2 or claim 3, arranged such that the first and the second images overlap.
6. A device according to claim 2 or claim 3, arranged such that the first and the second images do not overlap.
7. A device according to claim 2 or claim 3, wherein the one or more sensors are adapted to capture images of inherent physical aspects of the media.
8. A device according to claim 7, further comprising a processor device adapted to identify one or more features in each of the first and second images and to determine whether the one or more features identified in one image correspond to the one or more features identified in the other image.

9. A device according to claim 8, wherein the processor device is further adapted to determine the distance in a direction of skew between the position of at least one feature identified in the second image and the corresponding feature identified in the first image.

10. A device according to claim 1, arranged to generate images of a further portion of the print media at the first and second positions, and to compare a further pair of images each imaging the further portion of the print media and thereby detect a further change in the angle of skew of the media between the first and second positions.

11. A device according to claim 10, wherein the further pair of images comprises third and fourth images.

12. A device according to claim 11, wherein the further pair of images comprises the second image and a further image.

13. A device according to claim 12, wherein the device is arranged to sum the detected change and one or more further detected changes in the angle of skew of the media and to compare the summed value with a predetermined value.

14. A device according to claim 13, wherein the device is further arranged to determine an original angle of skew of the print media and to sum the detected change and one or more further detected changes in the angle of skew with the original angle.

15. A device according to claim 13 or claim 14, wherein the device is arranged to abort an operation, such as a printing and/or a media feed operation, if the summed value exceeds the predetermined value.

16. A device according to claim 13 or claim 14, wherein the predetermined value is variable and depends upon a dimension of the print media used or a print job being printed, such as the length of the print media or the print job in the media advance direction.

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17. A device according to claim 1, wherein the device is an inkjet printer.

18. A device according to claim 17, comprising one or more optical sensors.

10 19. A device according to claim 18, wherein the one or more optical sensors are located in a substantially fixed location relative to the media feed path.

20. A device according to claim 19, wherein the one or more sensors are located in a media supporting surface, such as a platen, of the printer.

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21. A sensor system for a printer device having a media feed path, the system arranged to generate a first image of a portion of print media at a first position along the feed path and to generate a second image of the portion of print media at a second position along the feed path, the system arranged to compare the first and
20 second images and thereby detect a change in the angle of skew of the media between the first and second positions.

22. A system according to claim 21, wherein the system comprises first and second sensors arranged to generate the first and second images respectively,
25 where the first and second images overlap.

23. A system according to claim 21, wherein the system comprises a sensor adapted to generate both the first and second images.

30 24. A system according to claim 22 or 23, wherein the one or more sensors are adapted to capture images of inherent physical aspects of the media.

25. A system according to claim 24, further comprising a processor device adapted to identify one or more features in each of the first and second images and to determine whether the one or more features identified in one image correspond to the one or more features identified in the other image.

26. A system according to claim 25, wherein the processor device is further adapted to determine the distance in the skew direction between the position of at least one feature identified in the second image and the corresponding feature identified in the first image.

27. A system according to claim 21, wherein system comprises one or more optical sensors.

28. A method of detecting skew of print media fed along a media feed path of a hard copy device, the method comprising the steps of;
generating a first image of one or more features associated with a portion of print media at a first location along the feed path;
feeding the print media along a media feed path;
generating a second image of the one or more features at a second location along the feed path;
comparing the first and second images of the one or more features to determine if the orientation of the media relative to the feed path has changed between the imaging steps.

29. A method according to claim 28, comprising the step of determining the distance that the one or more features have moved in a direction perpendicular to the media feed path direction.

30. A method according to claim 28 or claim 29, further comprising the steps of:

comparing a further pair of images each imaging one or more further features associated with a further portion of print media, when the further portion of print media is located at the first and second positions; and thereby,

5 determining if the orientation of the media relative to the feed path has further changed.

31. A method according to claim 30, wherein the further pair of images comprise third and fourth images.

10 32. A method according to claim 30, wherein the further pair of images comprise the second image and a further image.

33. A method according to claim 32, further comprising the step of determining a cumulative total corresponding to the magnitude of the change in orientation and
15 the further change in orientation.

34. A method according to claim 33, further comprising the steps of:
determining a value for the original orientation of the media relative to the media feed path; and,
20 summing the cumulative total and the original orientation value; and,
comparing the summed value with a predetermined value.

35. A computer program comprising program code means for performing the method steps of any one of claims 28 to 34 when the program is run on a computer
25 and/or other processing means associated with suitable apparatus.